

Message Text

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDITION OF PASSING INSTRUCTIONS)

STATE PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEC, PINT, NL
SUBJ: BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON HENK VREDELING

REF: EC BRUSSELS 12466 (NOTAL)

1. BACKGROUND: HENDRIKUS (HENK) BREDELING, NEWLY DESIGNATED
EC COMMISSIONER, WAS BONR NOV 20, 1924, IN AMERSFOORT. HE WAS
AN ACTIVITS IN THE RESISTANCE DURING NAZI OCCUPATION. HE RECEIVED
DIPLOMA IN AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING FROM UNIVERSITY OF WAGENINGEM.
IN 1950 HE BECAME SOCIAL ECONOMIC ADVISER TO GENERAL DUTCH
LAND WORKERS ORGANIZATION AND LATER HEADOF SCIENTIFIC SECTION
OF GENERAL DUTCH AGRICULTURAL UNION AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL
FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS. HE ENTERED SECOND CHAMBER IN 1956
AS MEMBER OF LABOR PARTY AND WAS ACTIVE MEMBER OF AGRICULTURAL
COMMITTEE. AT 33 HE BECAME MEMBER OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND WAS
MEMBER OF ITS AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE AND BECAME WIDELY KNOWN IN
EUROPEAN AGRICULTRUAL CIRCLES. HE VISITED US IN 1967 AS LEADER
GRANTEE AND TOOK SPECIAL INTEREST IN US MIGRANT AGRICULTURAL
LABOR TO POINT OF MAKING SPEECHES IN CALIFORNIS, AND AFTER
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RETURNING TO NETHERLANDS, MADE ABORTIVE EFFORT TO INDUCE
EUROPEAN BOYCOTT OF NON UNION US PRODUCE. IN MAY 1973 HE BECAME
DEF MINISTER IN DEN UYL CABINET. HE IS MARRIED, HAS FOUR
CHILDREN, SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH, PLAYS THE ORGAN (BACH), CALLS
A PIPE HIS BEST FREIND, "LOVES A GOOD GLASS" OF ALMOST ANYTHING
AND HAS REPUTATION FOR OCCASIONALLY SPOUTING OFF WHILE UNDER

THE INFLUENCE TO NEAREST REPORTER.

2. FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION: VREDELING IS A CONVINCED EUROPEAN INTEGRATIONIST. WHEN FOREIGN MIN VAN DER STOEL CHARACTERIZED HIM AS LABOR PARTYS "GAULLIST", VREDELING RESPONDED THAT THIS WAS AN EXAGGERATION BUT ADMITTED THAT HE IS MORE A EUROPEAN THAN AN ATLANTICIST. HE HAS EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT DUTCH HAVE BEEN TOO ATTACHED TO AMERICAN COATTAILS. HE HAS BEEN ACCUSED FROM TIME TO TIME OF BEING ANTI-GERMAN AND SOME DUTCH PRESS ARTICLES HAVE INDICATED FRG WOULD THEREFORE OPPOSE HIS CANDIDACY FOR AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER. HE ALSO HAS STATED THAT: "WHILE THE FRENCH CLAIM IT IS OTHERS WHO ARE NOT EUROPEAN, IT HAS IN FACT BEEN FRENCH WHO SYSTEMATICALLY BLOCK PROGRESS ON JOINT EUROPEAN ENDEAVORS AND THE COMMUNITY MUST COLLECTIVELY BRING PRESSURE ON FRANCE TO REDUCE ITS OPPOSITION". WHILE SERVING IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HE WORKED CLOSELY BUT UNSUCCESSFULLY WITH OTHER EUROPEAN SOCIALIST TOWARD CREATION OF A PROGRESSIVE EUROPEAN PARTY AND ALSO PRESSED FOR GREATER PARLIAMENTARY SAY IN INFLUENCING EC DECISIONS. IN 1971 HE REQUESTED EC COMMISSION INVESTIGATE WHETHER WESTINGHOUSE HAD VIOLATED EEC COMPETITION REGULATIONS. AS MIN OF DEF HE STATED PUBLICLY THAT EC 9 SHOULD GIVE COOPERATION ON FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE A MORE SUPRANATIONAL CHARACTER THAT WOULD OFFER SMALLER MEMBER STATES A CHANCE TO BE HEARD, WHILE ALSO EMPHASIZING THAT EUROPE'S VITAL INTERESTS COULD BE SAFEGUARDED ONLY BY CONTINUED ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND A POLICY OF DETENTE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. (HIS BELIEFS IN THIS AREA WERE FULLY AIRED IN SPEECH DELIVERED BEFORE EUROPEAN CIRCLE AT LOUVAIN ON JAN 29, 1976, AND COPIES ARE BEING POUCHED TO ADDRESSEES). HE LATER PROVIDED DEEP BACKGROUND BRIEFING IN OCT 1976 WHICH WAS SUBSEQUENTLY COVERED IN ARTICLE IN LONDON FINANCIAL TIMES, SUGGESTING CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION COULD BE A FORERUNNER (RATHER THAN CONSEQUENCE) OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL UNION. HE THRIVES ON DISCUSSION, DISSENSION AND PROVOCATIVE ARGUMENT. IN 1972 AT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HE PRESENTED 407 WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION--MORE THAN ALL THE OTHER 141 MEMBERS COMBINED--A PERFORMANCE THAT EARNED HIM THE NAME "VRAAGELING" (A PLAY ON HIS OWN NAME) MEANING QUESTIONER. HE CERTAINLY MAY BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE HIS LONG STANDING CRUSADE FOR FULLER DEMOCRATIZATION OF EC INSTITUTIONS.

3. NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE: HE FAVORS UNIFIED, OPENLY ARRIVED AT AND ENLIGHTENED EUROPEAN POLICY TOWARD THIRD WORLD, TO BE ACHIEVED THROUGH FULLY OPEN DISCUSSION NOT ONLY WITHIN EUROPE BUT ALSO WITH THIRD WORLD. HIS SYMPATHIES ARE WITH THE UNDERDOG AND HE IS SOCIALIST PREDILECTIONS FAVOR TRANSFERS TO THIRD WORLD.

4. CAP: WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION HE REGARDS HIMSELF AS THE

LEADING EUROPEAN AGRICULTURALIST AND HE WILL BE DISAPPOINTED IF NOT NAMED COMMISSIONER FOR AGRICULTURE. WITH HIS AGRICULTURAL BACKGROUND, SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURAL LABOR, AND DEVOTION TO INTEGRATE D EUROPEAN PROGRAMS, HE MAY BE EXPECTED TO BE A STRONG SUPPORTER OF CAP. HOWEVER HE WILL ALSO FAVOR A MORE SEARCHING EXAMINATION AND DISCUSSION OF BASIC ELEMENTS OF CAP IN EFFORT TO MAKE CAP AS PRACTICAL AND RESPONSIVE AS POSSIBLE TO EUROPEAN NEEDS AND INTERESTS. HE HAS OBSERVED THAT, ALTHOUGH HE IS A LIFE LONG SOCIALIST, HE HAS NEVER BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH IN HIS OWN MIND A SATISFACTORY RATIONALE FOR SOCIALIST METHODS IN AGRICULTURE. HE APPEARS STILL TO FAVOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE SMALL AND INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN FARMER ON SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC GROUNDS.

5. TRADE: HE REGARDS TRADE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS AS AREAS IN WHICH EC CAN PRESENTLY BEST WORK BUT UNIFIED VIEWS. WHILE WE HAVE NO DIRECT ASSESSMENT OF HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD MTN, WE CONFIDENTIAL

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BELIEVE HE WOULD FAVOR DEFENSE OF REASONABLE CAP WHILE ALSO WORKING STRONGLY FOR UNIFIED EC POSITIONS ON OTHER TRADE MATTERS.

6. ADMINISTRATOR: IN 1973 HE LOBBIED HARD FOR JOB OF MIN OF AGRICULTURE, BUT WHEN PERSUADED TO BE MIN OF DEF, MADE MAJOR AND HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO DEVELOP REAL EXPERTISE IN ALL ASPECTS OF DEFENSE WITH EMPHASIS ON POLICY ISSUES. HE MOVED STRONG MEN INTO KEY STAFF POSITIONS, ENCOURAGED OPENNESS, GAVE HIS DEPUTIES AUTHORITY AND RECOGNITION, AND FULLY SUPPORTED MINISTERIAL POSITIONS. HE AGAIN PROVED THAT HE HAS AN INCISIVE MIND AND IS AN ACTIVE PROTAGONIST. HIS MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT WAS 1974 DEFENSE WHITE PAPER WHICH FOR FIRST TIME CREATED DUTCH DEFENSE FORCES PLAN COVERING TEN YEAR PERIOD. (PRIOR TO THIS THERE HAD BEEN NO FORMAL INTEGRATED DEFENSE PLANNING THAT EXCEEDED ONE YEAR). HE IS ALSO CREDITED WITH CURRENT TOP LEVEL REORGANIZATION OF MIN OF DEF TO CENTRALIZE DECISION MAKING AT DEFENSE STAFF AND MINISTERIAL LEVEL. WITHIN NATO HE HAS REPEATEDLY CALLED FOR MORE STANDARDIZATION AND SPECIALIZATION OF DEFENSE TASKS TO ACHIEVE BETTER INTEGRATED DEFENSE FOR LESS MONEY. THUS, DESPITE AN INITIAL LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE IN DEFENSE MATTERS, HE HAS DONE A GOOD JOB AS MINISTER AND EVEN MEMBERS OF OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES AND MANY HIGH RANKING MEMBERS OF MILITARY AGREE THAT HE HAS BEEN AN ABLE ADMINISTRATOR. MCCLOSKEY

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